

RETURN TO GOV. DOCS. CLERK



by Roger E. McGay, David A. Gansner, and Jane R. Riddle

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Development of a good guide to local outdoor recreation facilities can be accomplished in five basic steps. Knowing your users and what information they need are key ingredients to success. The procedure outlined here was used successfully in northeastern Pennsylvania in 1976.

The "Great Outdoors" can seem like a jungle when you're looking for recreational opportunities but don't know where to turn. Although more and more people are looking for fun and relaxation out of doors, good guides or directories to local facilities are hard to come by.

We recently asked a number of resource managers, land use planners, and researchers to list critical needs in outdoor recreation. Topping their list was the need for reliable and complete directories to facilities. Directories are useful not only as guides to available services but also as data bases for subsequent studies of outdoor recreation.

How do you inventory and prepare a directory to facilities? We faced that question during a recent project in which recreation directories were prepared for 12 counties in northeastern Pennsylvania (Northeastern Forest Experiment Station 1976). The guides were produced in cooperation with two regional planning agencies—Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania and the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission—at a cost of about \$2,500 per county. Feedback from tourist bureaus, chambers of commerce, recreation associations, newspapers, and recreationists indicates the venture is a huge success. In this paper, we review the procedure used in producing the guides.

Given the resources to do the job, preparation of a useful directory requires five basic steps:

- Choose the activities to be included.
- Determine the type of information needed for each activity.
- Collect the information.
- Package the information into a useful product.
- Distribute the product to the user.

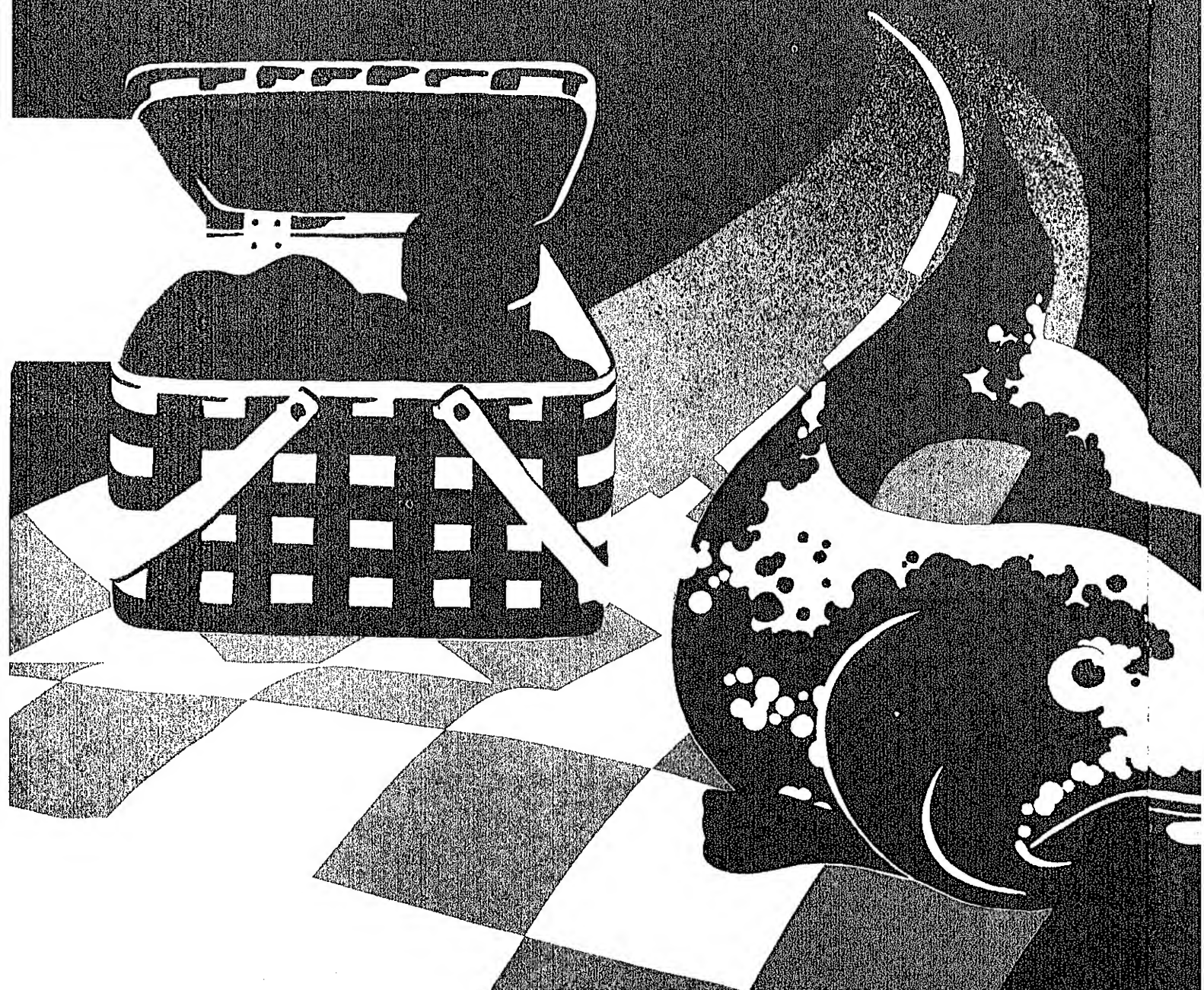
But remember, directories are soon outdated, so provisions must be made for keeping the information current.

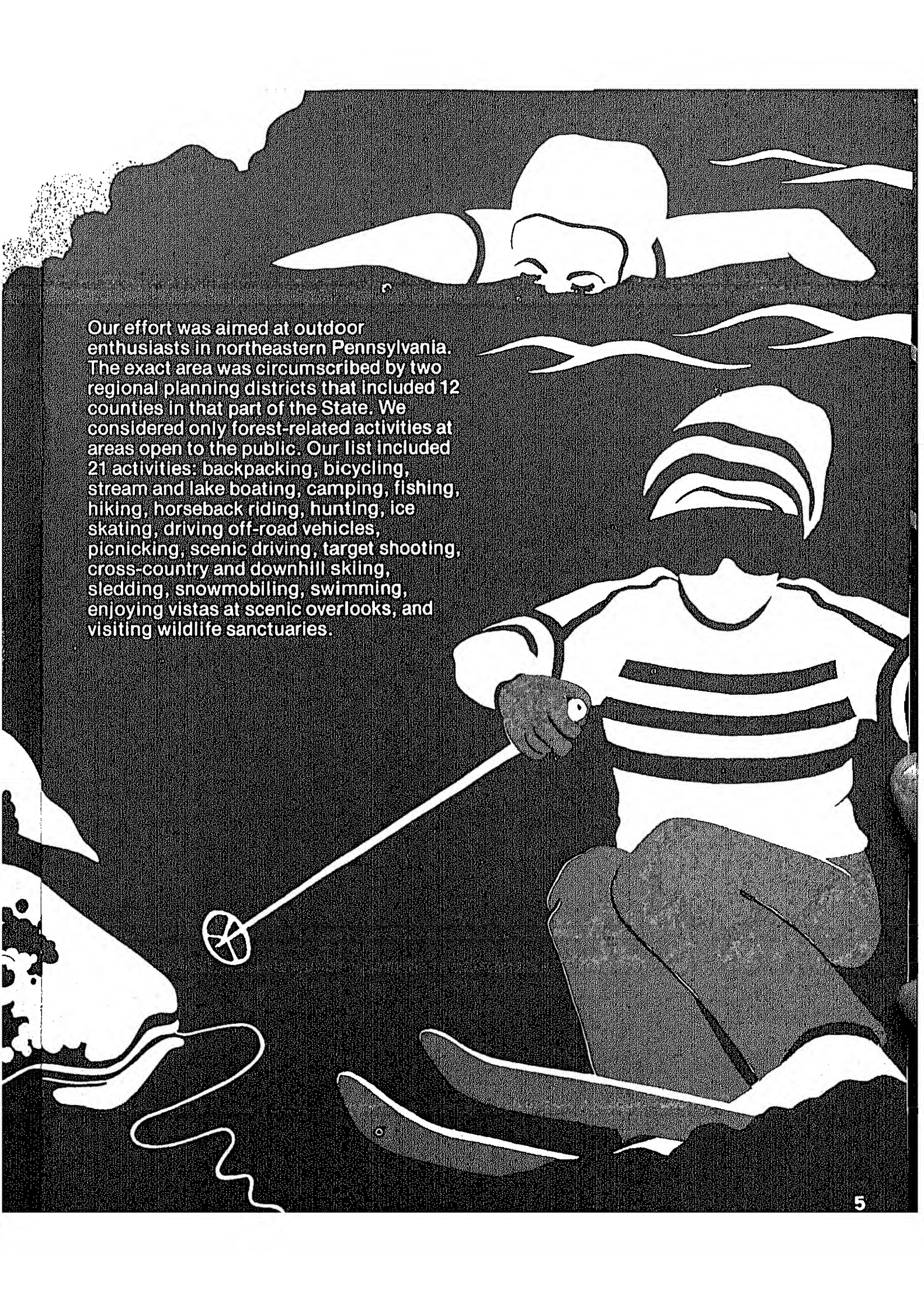
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1 Choosing Activities

Who? That is the question to ask in choosing activities to include in the directory. Determine your audience—what group are you trying to reach?


























Our effort was aimed at outdoor enthusiasts in northeastern Pennsylvania. The exact area was circumscribed by two regional planning districts that included 12 counties in that part of the State. We considered only forest-related activities at areas open to the public. Our list included 21 activities: backpacking, bicycling, stream and lake boating, camping, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, ice skating, driving off-road vehicles, picnicking, scenic driving, target shooting, cross-country and downhill skiing, sledding, snowmobiling, swimming, enjoying vistas at scenic overlooks, and visiting wildlife sanctuaries.

2 Deciding What to Collect

Having settled on a list of recreational activities, we set out to determine the kind of information that people would need to participate in these activities. We talked with a variety of users, examined other directories, recalled personal experiences, and came up with the following items, from which a checklist for each activity was developed. (Page 7). Included were:

- **Name**
- **Ownership:** Is it public or private? If private, users must ask permission. Indicates who to contact for information.
- **Address and telephone number:** Where to write or call for reservations or information.
- **Entrance or user fee:** Is there a charge and how much?
- **Restrictions:** Helps avoid surprises, such as "no pets allowed."
Facilities: Conveniences such as electric and sewer hookups, shelters along trails, first aid station.
Concessions or supplies: Items that can be bought or rented at the area—groceries, boats, camping equipment
- **Area (land and water):** Amount of area available for recreation. A water skier would not be interested in a 2-acre lake.
- **Points of interest:** Educational features that are unique to an area—historical sites, unusual rock formations, vegetation.
- **Maps and guides:** Availability of more specific information—brochures for self-guided nature trail, lake contour maps.
- **Access points and parking locations:** Safe and convenient places to start and end activities—parking areas, boat launching sites, trail heads.
- **Season of use:** Time of year that the facility is usable—campground opening and closing dates, months of low streamflow for river boating.
- **Drinking water:** Should water be brought along or can what's there be treated?
- **Length of trails:** How long an outing will it be?
- **Degree of difficulty:** Expertise or stamina required—American White Water Association ratings for rivers, tour ratings for cross-country ski trails.
- **Fish and wildlife:** Species commonly found in the area.
- **Special information:** Important items not listed above, for example, weekend square dances, river gauging stations, and fishing tournaments.

activity	name	ownership	address and telephone number	entrance or user fee	restrictions	facilities	concessions or supplies	area (land and water)	points of interest	maps and guides	access points and parking locations	season of use	drinking water	length of trails	degree of difficulty	fish and wildlife	special information
 backpacking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 bicycling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 boating, lake	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 boating, stream	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 camping	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 driving off-road vehicles	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 enjoying vistas at scenic overlooks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 fishing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 hiking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 horseback riding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 hunting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 ice skating	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 picnicking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 scenic driving	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 skiing, cross-country	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 skiing, downhill	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 sledding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 snowmobiling	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 swimming	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 target shooting	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
 visiting wildlife sanctuaries	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Area Inventory

Lackawanna State Park

name

RD 1 Dalton, Pa. 18102

717-945-3239

address

phone number

Pa. Dept. of Environmental Resources

ownership or managing agency

1300 acres

220 acres

land area

lake area

none

entrance fee

available activities:

☐ backpacking

☒ bicycling

☒ boating, lake

☐ boating, stream

☒ camping

☐ driving off-road vehicles

☒ enjoying vistas at scenic overlooks

☒ fishing

☒ hiking

☐ horseback riding

☒ hunting

☒ ice skating

☒ picnicking

☐ scenic driving

☒ skiing, cross-country

☐ skiing, downhill

☒ sledding

☐ snowmobiling

☒ swimming

☐ target shooting

☒ visiting wildlife sanctuaries

food concession at swimming pool, boat rental

concession or supplies

Pa. State Park Regulations

restrictions

summer outdoor educational classes

special information

Activity Inventory-Camping

Lackawanna State Park

name

camping

activity

\$3.00/night

user fee

facilities

30

tent sites

none

sewer hookups

70

trailer sites

yes

flush toilets

none

cabins

yes

showers

none

laundry

yes

dumping station

none

electric hookups

first aid, fireplaces, playgrounds

other

points of interest

April to October

season of use

yes

drinking water

Activity Inventory-Bicycling

Lackawanna State Park

name

bicycling

activity

none

user fee

hard surface roads

facilities

points of interest

general park map at park office

maps and guides

several throughout park

access points and parking locations

located at campground and picnic areas

drinking water

3 miles

length of trail

easy



moderate

strenuous

degree of difficulty

class 3

class of bikeway*

*class 1 — a completely separated right-of-way for the exclusive use of bicycles.

class 2 — a restricted right-of-way for the exclusive or semi-exclusive use of bicycles. (bike lane)

class 3 — a shared right-of-way so designated by signs placed on vertical posts or stencilled on the pavement. (bike route)

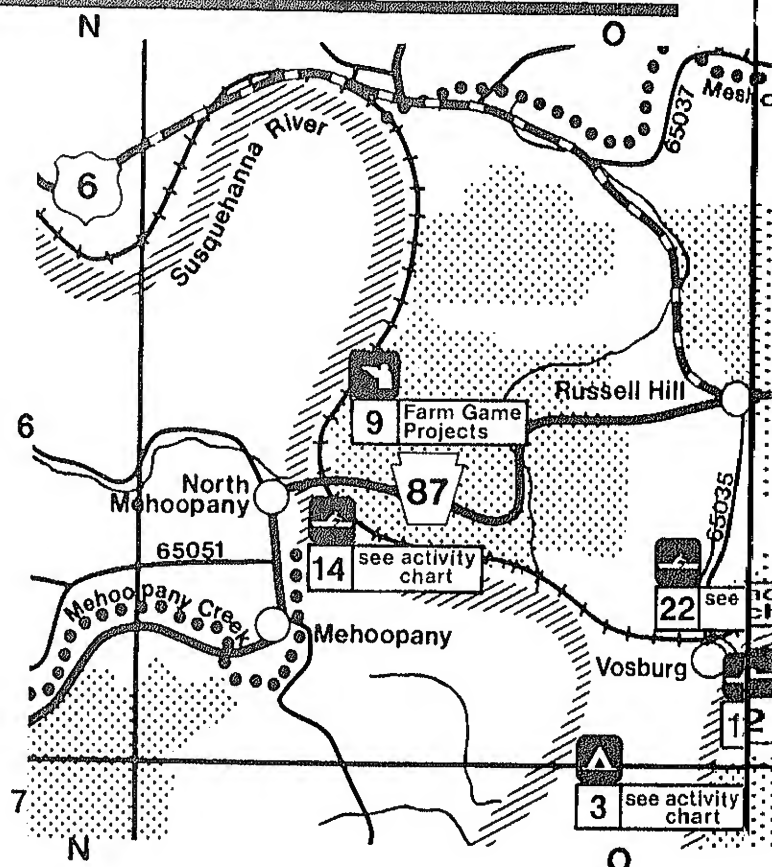
4 Packaging the Product

Now that you've identified your audience, know their needs, and have the information in hand, what do you do with it? Put yourself in the user's shoes. The most helpful directories are complete, accurate, and easy to use. The first two requirements can be met only by the tedious process of checking and rechecking your information in every phase of the project. In the end, it's worth the effort, since a directory full of errors won't be used.

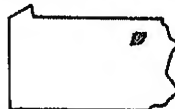
We had a lot of information which we needed to present in a way that would make it most accessible. We decided to use both maps and guidebooks.

The maps, one for each county, were printed on one side of a large sheet of paper, with activity charts on the back. They showed the name, location, and phone number of each recreation area and indicated the activities available at that area. To highlight recreation opportunities and avoid clutter, we included on the maps only those features (streams, lakes, roads, etc.) that we thought would be important to users.

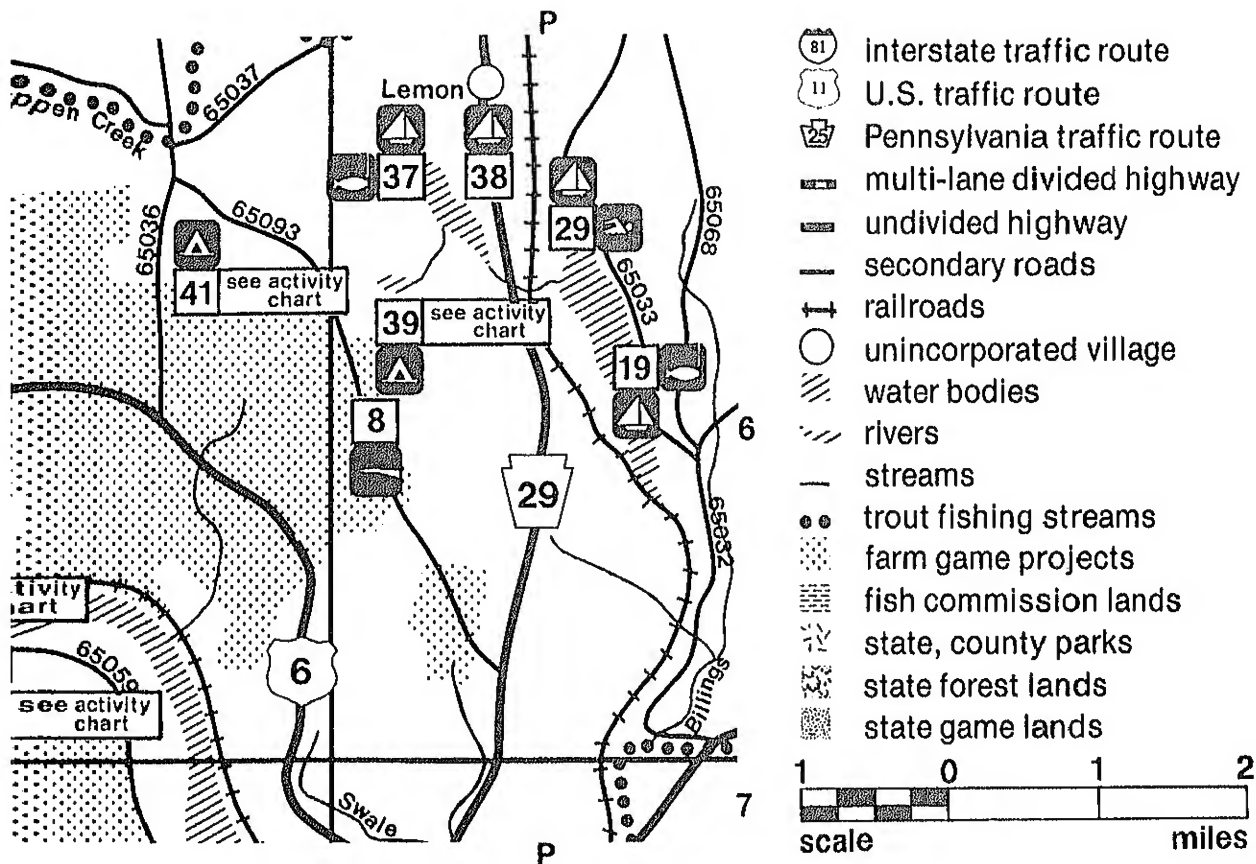
The guidebooks were tailored to each county. They included a chapter on each activity—with cross-references to other activities at each recreation area—and provided details about facilities (page 14).



Wyoming County Pennsylvania



name of facility	phone number	
Bowman's Creek		1
Brickyard		2
Camp Lackawanna	717-833-3444	3
Camp Onawanda	717-836-3404	4
Camp Spear	717-945-9502	5
Ciprich's Camp	717-869-1094	6



facility	map coordinates	backpacking	bicycling	boating, lake	boating, stream	camping	driving off-road vehicles	enjoying vistas at scenic overlooks	fishing	hiking	horseback riding	hunting	ice skating	picnicking	scenic driving	skiing, cross-country	skiing, downhill	sledding	snowmobiling	swimming	target shooting	visiting wildlife sanctuaries	total number of activities
O-7, 8				●				●															2
P-7													●						●				2
O-7				●	●		●	●	●				●										6
P-7				●	●			●					●						●				5
Q-7		●		●				●	●										●				5
N-5				●	●			●	●				●						●				6

Sample from Sullivan County



Skiing, Cross-Country

3 Broad Horizons Resort (717) 482-3491

Charles Fyfe
RD 1
Muncy Valley, Pa.

200 acres land, 3 acres water

facility identification number: 3

map coordinates: J-9

restrictions: must be camper to use facilities

concessions: cross-country ski rentals

access points and parking: trail head near campground

drinking water: in campground

length of trails: 2 miles

degree of difficulty: moderate

Other activities include lake boating, camping, fishing, hiking, hunting, ice skating, picnicking, downhill skiing, sledding, snowmobiling, swimming, and viewing scenery.

33 Ricketts Glen State Park

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources
RD 2
Benton, Pa. 17814

13,100 acres land, 254 acres lake, 10 miles stream

facility identification number: 33

map coordinates: L-9, M-9

restrictions: see Pennsylvania State Park regulations

maps and guides: general map showing trails, available at park office

access points and parking: many areas—see map

drinking water: in picnic and camping areas

length of trails: 3 miles

degree of difficulty: from beginner to expert

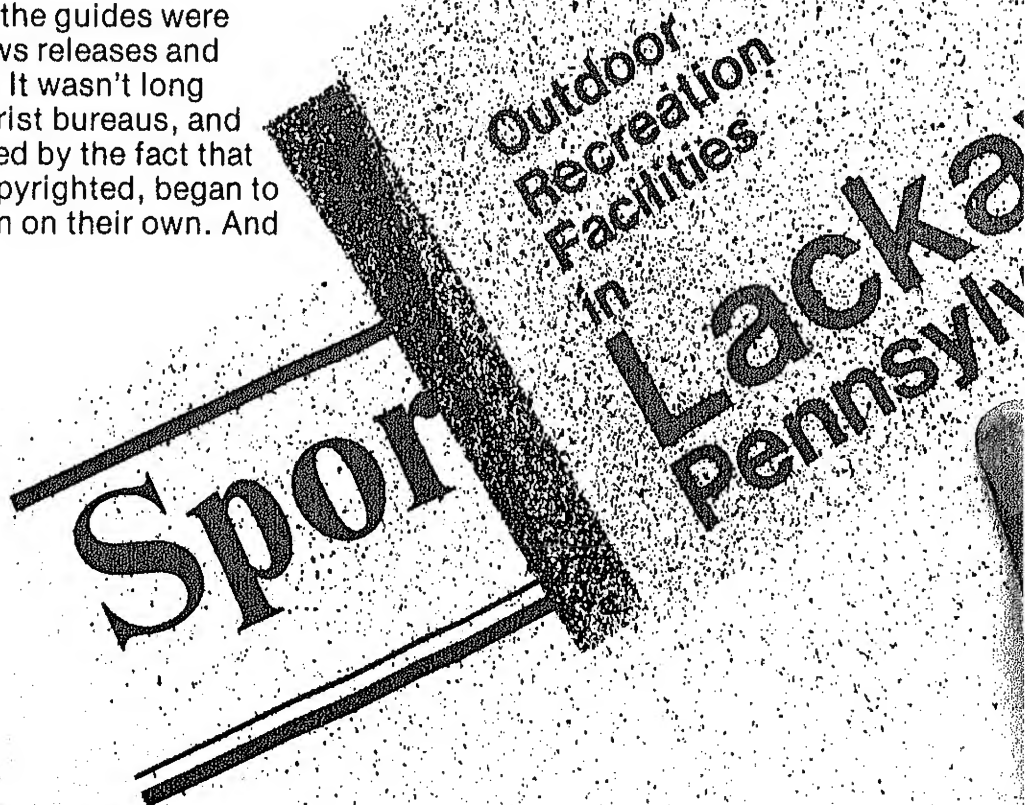
Other activities include bicycling, lake boating, camping, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting, ice skating, picnicking, sledding, snowmobiling, swimming, and viewing scenery.

5 Distributing the Product

Your aim here is to get the directories to as many people as possible, and at the lowest cost both to you and to them. Outdoor recreation guides are very popular items and will break your printing budget if you give them away. You'll find that people are willing to pay a reasonable price for them.

Since we lacked the resources and facilities to print, distribute, and sell the guides, we worked with a local recreation association to set up a system for the final stages of the project. Our cooperators, the Economic Development Council of Northeastern Pennsylvania and the Northern Tier Regional Planning and Development Commission, also printed and distributed a limited number of directories.

To let people know that the guides were available, we issued news releases and held press conferences. It wasn't long before newspapers, tourist bureaus, and other groups, encouraged by the fact that the directories aren't copyrighted, began to print and distribute them on their own. And that's where we are.



Literature Cited

Northeastern Forest Experiment Station.
1976. **Outdoor Recreation Facilities in
Northeastern Pennsylvania.** U. S. Dep. Agric.
Northeast. For. Exp. Stn. Broomall, Pa.
Misc. Publ.

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